

The Greatest Gift

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The Greatest Gift

by [SilverWing15](#)

Summary

(Surprise is the greatest gift that life can grant us)

Part of the Dumpster Verse

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“Uh...nice night,” Phil says for lack of anything better.

The kid looks around as if assessing the night and then shrugs. “Chilly.”

“Little bit,” Phil agrees. “You have somewhere warm to stay?”

He’s expecting a polite decline, or a defensive one. He isn’t expecting the kid to tilt his head at him and say: “no.”

“Oh,” Phil says. “Well...uh. You can come with me if you want.”

The kid looks at him for a long moment. Judging, weighing. “Okay.”

Huh. Well, alright then.

Phil maybe should have asked Techno before he invited a middle schooler into their secret base. Oh well.

OR: five times Wilbur surprised Phil and one time he wasn't surprised at all

Notes

Wilbur backstory wooo!

This one has a bit shorter chapters than my usual and I considered releasing it all as one big thing but I prefer the chapter format so you guys get to have short chapters for a bit, sorry. It was still a bunch of fun to write and I hope you all enjoy it.

This is set a good jump back from Niki's oneshot, which was probably only a couple years before One Man's Trash. This is starting up back when Wilbur was twelve and hopping back to the present.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

When he Stayed

In the Vault, things were muted. Sounds were muffled, colors were dull, tastes were bland. In the real world things are bright, bold, almost too much sometimes. Its gotten less as the months and years have gone by, but Phil and to a lesser degree Techno both have moment where they can be overwhelmed.

Like now.

Because somehow Phil forgot how fucking *terrible* garbage smells. And he is, currently, laying in a dumpster.

The lid creaks open over him and Phil tenses, flexing his hands. The heroes are hunting him, but they will learn what it means to face the Angel of Death. No matter how terrible the garbage smells, it is better than the vault.

Only it isn't a hero who looks down at him.

"Why are you laying in a dumpster?"

The boy is small, maybe ten, twelve on the outside. His cheeks are thin and dirty, his hair matted and greasy.

"Its relaxing," Phil says even though that is in no way why he is in a dumpster. "Why are you looking in a dumpster?"

"I'm hungry," the boy shrugs.

"Oh," Phil says, frowning. He makes no claim to be an expert on child rearing but he's pretty sure that letting kids eat out of the dumpster isn't something that's come in style in the past six years. Combined with the general terrible condition of the boy, Phil's pretty sure he's homeless.

That's not something he wants to think about, a twelve year old being stuck out on the streets in times like these. Its dangerous out here even for adults.

Hence Phil being in a dumpster.

"I think I have a protein bar in my pocket," he says, shifting to grab it. He hisses as his arm flares with pain, but its easy enough to ignore. Its only dislocated. He grabs the bar and offers it up to the kid. "Its a little smushed but still sealed. Better than anything you'll find in here."

"Thanks," the boy says and takes it from Phil's hands with only a reasonable amount of fear for taking food from a guy he found in a dumpster.

He doesn't realize, he doesn't know, what Phil's hands can do.

"Do you. Um. Want the dumpster open or closed...?" the kid asks.

Phil laughs, “open. Thanks.”

The kid nods and disappears.

The shadow in the far end of the dumpster blinks at him and Phil forgets the kid. He reaches his hand out to it and it presses its head into his palm. “I’m alright,” he tells Techno, who he knows is listening through its ears, “just a dislocated shoulder.”

The shadow whispers, the words are unintelligible, but the tone is clear.

“Yes, yes, we’ll get our revenge,” Phil says, “but first I want a shower. Maybe two. Ugh.”

Phil doesn’t make a habit of ending up in dumpsters, so it’s kind of a surprise when he runs into the kid again. To be fair, their current hideout is barely a few steps above a dumpster.

Still, it’s a surprise to see him huddled on the opposite street corner as Phil is heading back. “Hey,” he says, because he’d once been the sort of guy who said hello to his neighbors.

The kid jumps, but he doesn’t bolt, doesn’t look anything more than wary to see Phil. “Hi.”

He’s still looking at Phil, like he wants something.

Phil was once the sort of guy who knew how to read people, how to have conversations with someone other than Techno. He isn’t that sort of guy anymore.

“Uh...nice night,” he says for lack of anything better.

The kid looks around as if assessing the night and then shrugs. “Chilly.”

“Little bit,” Phil agrees. “You have somewhere warm to stay?”

He’s expecting a polite decline, or a defensive one. He isn’t expecting the kid to tilt his head at him and say: “no.”

“Oh,” Phil says. “Well...uh. You can come with me if you want.”

The kid looks at him for a long moment. Judging, weighing. “Okay.”

Huh. Well, alright then.

Phil maybe should have asked Techno before he invited a middle schooler into their secret base. Oh well.

Techno stares at the boy in the doorway for a long moment, face unreadable. “What’s your name kid?” he says finally.”

“Uh. Will,” the boy says. “Wilbur.”

Techno nods. “There’s enough food to go around Wilbur, sit down.”

The shadows hover around him eagerly, keeping out of sight for those who might not know how to spot them. Phil can see them trailing the kid though. Not stalking, not hunting. There is nothing aggressive in their manner.

They're *babysitting*.

Its adorable.

Wilbur stays the night, he's careful, but not skittish, not jumpy. He's new on the streets, Phil thinks. That's alright, they're fairly new too.

He gets the feeling they'll be seeing a lot of each other.

When he Hugged Him

Chapter Summary

He taps Techno's shoulder. Techno's eyes gleam in the dark like his shadows'. "I think Will's sick," Phil murmurs, "lemme up I'm gonna go check on him."

Techno frowns, "the shadows didn't say anything."

"I heard someone throwing up," Phil says, "I'll handle whoever it is."

"Gonna kill a man worshiping at the porcelain altar Phil?"

"If they get near Wilbur I will."

"Sap."

Phil is good enough at spotting Techno's shadows that he can see three of them following him. Who's the real sap?

Chapter Notes

This is my favorite chapter of Will's backstory, I hope you enjoy.

Warning for mild mention of vomiting and child neglect but other than that fluff!

Life moves on, time moves forward, they progress. No longer are they hiding in shadows and being hunted. Now they are feared, now they are the hunters.

When they walk down the street, people recognize them, and people flee.

Which, Phil will admit, makes it difficult to get groceries.

Its a good thing that they have Wilbur.

Phil had laughed to Techno one night, that he hadn't anticipated ever adopting a teenager when they went on their mission of vengeance against the world. Techno had snorted.

"We didn't adopt him," he murmured, "he adopted us."

Phil didn't have any argument to that.

They've moved into an actual apartment now. Its still abandoned, and run down, because there is not a landlord in the *world* that will rent to them, but it is a building intended for human habitation. Its a step up from the last place. There's not even holes in the walls. That lead outdoors.

The plumbing works at least, which is a good thing, because Phil's pretty sure he just heard Wilbur throwing up.

He taps Techno's shoulder. Techno's eyes gleam in the dark like his shadows'. "I think Will's sick," Phil murmurs, "lemme up I'm gonna go check on him."

Techno frowns, "the shadows didn't say anything."

"I heard *someone* throwing up," Phil says, "I'll handle whoever it is."

"Gonna kill a man worshiping at the porcelain altar Phil?"

"If they get near Wilbur I will."

"Sap."

Phil is good enough at spotting Techno's shadows that he can see three of them following him. Who's the real sap?

Phil can definitely hear Wilbur's voice, whispering to someone. He pauses, hovering in the hall, waiting to see if anyone answers.

Nobody does, but Phil can hear soft sobbing. He bites back the urge to lunge around the corner, ready to confront a stranger who is making his--his?--kid cry.

He moves leisurely instead, like a stalking jungle cat, ready to intimidate. But there is no stranger, there is only Wilbur on the floor of the bathroom. There is a flashlight on the sink--the plumbing works, but not the electricity--and in its light Wilbur looks pale and pitiful. He probably looks that way anyway, but the flashlight makes it worse.

Phil hopes its the flashlight making it worse.

There are a pair of glowing crimson eyes watching from behind the toilet. Techno said the shadows hadn't said anything, but clearly they knew. Interesting.

"Hey mate," Phil says gently, Wilbur jumps a little bit and then swallows hard with a queasy look.

"Phil--I--I'm sorry. I'll be more quiet I--"

"Mate, mate, you're sick. You be as loud as you please," Phil soothes, crouching in the doorway without coming closer. Wilbur is probably the most well adjusted out of the three of them--not that that's hard--and he's definitely well adjusted for a kid Phil found eating out of the garbage--again, not exactly an amazing feat--but he still has his...hangups.

One of them is not being anything that might be considered a bother. He wouldn't eat their food if they didn't put it in front of him and not let him leave the table until at least half of it was gone.

"I'm fine," Wilbur says. The shadows whisper clear denial.

“Your friends don’t seem to think so.”

Wilbur winces, slumping against the toilet, “I told them not to bother you guys.”

“They didn’t,” Phil says, “I’m just a light sleeper.”

That’s the wrong thing to say, apparently, because Wilbur winces even harder, curling his shoulders up to his ears. “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to--”

“I’m not bothered,” Phil interrupts. “I just wanted to come check on you. It doesn’t sound like you feel very good. Can I check your forehead mate?”

He was in the Vault for six years, he has memories, he had a life, before it. Sometimes it feels like it belonged to someone else. Like it was some other kid who had Phil’s mother press the inside of her wrist to his forehead like he’s doing to Wilbur now. Phil wasn’t born in the Vault, Phil didn’t die in the Vault.

Its both true and a lie. Some part of him died there, and some part was born.

But there’s a new Phil being born now. A Phil who is both the Angel of Death, and who is somehow a parent.

“You’ve got a bit of a fever going on there mate, how’s your stomach feel? Think you’re gonna throw up some more or do you want some water?”

Wilbur wraps his arms around his stomach, trying and failing not to lean into Phil’s touch. “I’m fine.”

“We’ll try some water,” Phil decides, “I’ll get you a cup, hold on okay?”

He stands and makes his way through the dark to the kitchen. He didn’t grab his own flashlight, an oversight on his part. Its easy enough to grab a cup and bring it back to Wilbur. He fills it in the bathroom sink and gently hands it down to the boy. Fingers lingering on the rim to make sure Wilbur actually has a good hold on it.

“Swish the first sip and spit it out, and then take small sips to drink,” he says, echoing the mother of another version of himself.

Wilbur obeys quietly and Phil sits with him on the floor til he makes it about halfway through the glass. “Still feeling alright?”

Wilbur nods looking anywhere but at Phil, “you can go back to bed,” he whispers, “I’m fine on my own I don’t want--”

“You’re not a bother,” Phil murmurs, “if you want to be alone, you can be, but I’d like to sit with you if you’re okay with it.”

Wilbur hiccups, and Phil is afraid he’s going to lunge for the toilet again. Instead, something much worse happens.

Wilbur starts crying.

It's so quiet and subtle that Phil almost doesn't realize it's happening. There is only a slight shake of Wilbur's shoulders, a hitch in his breath, a soft sniffle.

The shadows whisper comfort, gathering around Wilbur and looking expectantly to Phil with gleaming eyes.

"Oh mate," Phil murmurs, hesitating, but in the end he scoots closer.

Wilbur meets him halfway, slowly leaning towards Phil like he's caught in Phil's gravity. He's holding onto the cup so tightly that Phil is afraid he'll shatter it, gently he takes it from Wilbur's hands and sets it aside. "Mate," Phil murmurs again.

His mother once rocked him on the floor of a room, his father's hat clutched to his chest. Setting aside her own mourning to help him through his.

Phil isn't sure what to do, what exactly Wilbur is crying about. All he knows is that the boy (his boy) is crying, and Phil is somehow the one who is there to help him.

"I'm--I'm s-sorryy," Wilbur moans, "I just--"

"No, no, no," Phil croons, "you can cry. It's okay to cry. I cry all the time. So does Techno. Crying's a natural thing mate."

"I don't want to be a bother," Wilbur says desperately.

"You aren't, you could never be a bother. You're--you're ours. You're mine." His tongue stumbles on the words, ones he hasn't even dared think to himself, but now they are spoken aloud. Fragile as baby birds testing their wings. He isn't sure if they'll fall to their doom, or rise to the skies.

Wilbur doesn't have much room to move, but he still manages to launch himself into Phil's chest hard enough to make Phil grunt. "I--My last foster family kicked me out," he confesses to Phil's chest. "They said--they said I was too much, but I don't know how to be *less*."

The words hit like a gut-punch.

"Never," Phil murmurs fiercely, "you never have to be less. You are yourself, and we love every inch of you. Never be less than that, you could never be too much."

Wilbur sobs, a real, gut-wrenching sob.

"Aw kid," Techno murmurs from behind them.

Wilbur sobs harder, "I didn't mean to wake you up," he says miserably.

"You can wake us up," Techno rumbles, "whenever you need, okay? We can get more sleep, we only get one of you." he crouches behind Phil, reaching over his shoulder to rest his hand in Wilbur's hair.

Wilbur looks up at him, his face is tear stained and pale and caught in some terrible battle between disbelief and hope.

“You are precious,” Phil murmurs, “you are *ours*. Whatever you need, we’ll get you, we’ll do for you. Nothing is too much. *You* could *never* be too much.”

“Come on kid, let’s get you to bed,” Techno says. “We can talk in the morning, or whenever you’re feeling better. For now, just let us take care of you, okay?”

“Okay,” Wilbur whispers, like speaking too loud will make them realize what they’re saying. As if they aren’t fully aware, as if they haven’t been thinking this for weeks. Months.

Phil slowly helps Wilbur to his feet. Not that he stays on them long. Techno scoops him up as soon as there’s room for him to.

“Careful,” Phil scolds, “he just got done throwing up, don’t swing him around.”

“Mother hen.”

Wilbur laughs, so soft Phil almost misses it. His heart warms, a rush of love and a terrifying certainty that if anyone tries to make this boy cry ever again he will do *terrible* things.

Its the same sort of feeling he had when Techno made that promise on a city rooftop. Newly freed and promising to Phil that he would fly.

Wilbur is his. His son, his child. *His*.

He will tear the world apart if it tries to take him.

Techno gently settles Wilbur down in the middle of their bed, giving him some of their pillows and wrapping him snugly in the blankets. “There you go,” he says, brushing Wilbur’s hair out of his eyes, “if you need to get up let us know, right?”

“Okay,” Wilbur whispers.

Techno hums approvingly and climbs into bed beside Will. Phil takes the other side and he can’t resist reaching out to rest the back of his fingers against Wilbur’s cheek. Wilbur leans into the touch, and then, to Phil’s surprise, he scoots closer.

Phil wraps him in arms and wings. His son. His little boy.

When he Left

Chapter Summary

“Dance with me,” Wilbur croons, and his voice wraps around Phil, like strings on a marionette, and Phil’s body obeys.

Wilbur freezes, staring at him, eyes wide, face pale. And oh, oh.

Wilbur never mentioned having a power of his own. Phil had simply assumed he didn’t have one.

Apparently his assumption was incorrect.

Chapter Notes

lil bit of angst today fam, it can't all be happy times

The radio blares loud and cheery, some pop song that Phil would usually hate. Its hard to hate it when it is making Wilbur laugh so much. They’re supposed to be doing dishes but apparently this is Will’s favorite song and it can’t be allowed to play unaccompanied.

“I don’t know how you can tell this is your favorite. It sounds just like every other song they play.”

Wilbur laughs, loud and free and flicks water at Phil, “you’re so booring,” he accuses. “Ohh I’m Philza, I only like Classical Music.”

Phil winds up a rag and snaps it at him, making sure that it doesn’t end up anywhere near his skin. “Listen here you little shit-”

Wilbur dances away, giggling, “no, I’m wrong, classical is too modern for you. You like those bone flutes right? Make ‘em out of brontosaurus bone.”

Phil snorts, “I’m not old, you’re just a child.”

“Likely story.”

Phil shakes his head and turns back to the dishes, “come on, come dry these.”

Wilbur sings a lyric alongside the radio. “Let them air dry,” he says, “Come dance with me.”

“I am not dancing.”

“What, too hard on your back?”

Phil snorts.

“Dance with me,” Wilbur croons, and his voice wraps around Phil, like strings on a marionette, and Phil’s body obeys.

Wilbur freezes, staring at him, eyes wide, face pale. And oh, *oh*.

Wilbur never mentioned having a power of his own. Phil had simply assumed he didn’t have one.

Apparently his assumption was incorrect.

His body twists and when he turns back around, Wilbur is gone. For a moment, Phil is terrified, Wilbur is running, and he can do nothing but obey the command. Will it wear off or will he be stuck here, dancing to a dumb pop song while Wilbur runs?

Stop, he tries to tell his limbs, *Wilbur needs me*.

He dances on.

“Techno! *Techno!*”

There is a thump from their bedroom, where Techno was taking a nap. He bursts into the kitchen, shadows bristling around him. His face is set into the mask of the Blade, deadly, focused. He falters when he sees Phil.

“Phil what--? I thought something was wrong?”

“It is! Will’s running. His power, he’s a mind type--fuck!” the strings suddenly snap. Either wherever he is, Wilbur realized and released Phil or some limit was reached. Phil stumbles into the counter.

Techno lurches forward to catch him. “What--”

“Send the shadows, find Will,” Phil orders. “We have to find him.”

He looked so scared. Like he thought that Phil would do something to him. He has seen many people look at him like that.

He never wanted Wilbur to be one of them.

The shadows spill out of the room as soon as the words leave his lips. Its still day outside so they will be limited, but god Phil hopes they can find him. Before he gets too far away, before he gets lost or hurt or--

“Phil,” Techno says, cupping his face in his hands, “what happened? You’ve got to brief me.”

He looks calm, but the military terminology only comes out when he's truly worried. Phil swallows.

"We were doing dishes, playing around. Wilbur wanted me to dance with him. He-- apparently he has some sort of mental powers that he was hiding from us. He bolted when he realized he'd used them on me."

"Shit," Techno mutters. "Alright, we'll find him. We have to be careful, he's probably scared."

"He's terrified," Phil whispers.

Techno pulls him closer, "we'll find him. We'll sort him out, it'll be alright."

They look.

They look and they look but they don't find him. It's well into the early hours of the morning when Techno makes them go back home. "Will might have come back," he says, arm around Phil's shoulders. Half holding him back, half holding him up. He's been flying over the city for hours.

Heroes came to challenge them, but they'd hardly spared them a glance. They had more important things than heroes and vengeance to deal with.

They go back home, but Wilbur isn't there.

That makes it a little less like home.

When he Returned

Chapter Summary

He didn't take his jacket.

Phil sees it by the door every time they go out. Waiting for Wilbur to come back and claim it. He touches the shoulder each time he goes past, like a prayer. He isn't sure who he's praying to. Whoever it is, they aren't listening.

Chapter Notes

From y'all's reactions you'd think that Wilbur was never coming back 😊 You guys have read One Man's Trash, you know he's gonna be fine

They don't find him the first night. Or the one after. Wilbur is out there in the city, somewhere, alone. Winter looming on the horizon.

He didn't take his jacket.

Phil sees it by the door every time they go out. Waiting for Wilbur to come back and claim it. He touches the shoulder each time he goes past, like a prayer. He isn't sure who he's praying to. Whoever it is, they aren't listening.

He hasn't slept, has only eaten protein bars when Techno hands them to him. It catches up with him on the third morning. He stumbles when he gets out of bed.

"You stay here," Techno commands.

"What? No. Fuck off I'm not sitting around--"

"You're not flying around the city if you can't even get out of bed," Techno says, there is no room for argument in his voice.

Phil argues anyway. "Then I'll walk."

"The heroes are going to pick you off," Techno says, unmoved. "Stay here. Rest. Eat. Maybe he'll come back."

He hasn't come back in two days, today won't be any different.

"I'm not--"

“Yes, you are. I’ll make my shadows keep you here if I have to,” Techno says sternly pointing to the ground. Like Phil is a misbehaving pup.

“Techno--”

“No, Phil. Stay.”

Phil growls, but Techno is unmoved. They glare at each other for a silent, tense moment. Finally, Techno sighs. “Please,” he says softly, “I can’t worry about you both. Stay here, where you’re safe. For me?”

“Techno...” Phil sighs, “alright. I’ll stay. In case he comes back.”

Techno presses their foreheads together, “we’ll find him,” he promises. “He’s our kid.”

Techno leaves, to look for their kid, and Phil stays.

He forces himself to choke down real food, takes a shower, and tries to sleep. Every time he closes his eyes he can see Wilbur out there. Alone, scared, somehow sure that his home is no longer his home. All because of his power.

What did he think they would do?

How can they convince him that they won’t do it?

Phil wanders the apartment. He makes a vague attempt at cleaning. Techno left his coat hung over the back of Phil’s chair. He returns it to its rightful place beside the door.

Wilbur’s jacket is still there. Its a nice one, warm, thick. It would be good for this weather. Wilbur is probably cold without it. Phil takes it reverently off the hook and holds it close.

He ends up on the steps in front of the building, Wilbur’s jacket still in his hands. He smooths the faux fur lining mindlessly. Wilbur is probably so cold without this. Cold and alone and scared. Of them.

A shoe scuffs the concrete. Phil waits for the person to realize who exactly is sitting on the ground, waits for the fast pound of fleeing footsteps. They don’t run.

He turns his head.

Its Wilbur.

Phil’s breath catches.

Wilbur is standing there, his face is pale, made more so by the bags under his eyes. He hasn’t been sleeping. Phil wonders if he’s been having nightmares again.

He hopes not.

“Hi mate,” Phil dares to breathe.

“Phil,” Wilbur whispers, “I--” he shuffles a cautious step back.

“I won’t move,” Phil says, “I’ll stay right here. Its okay.” He’s breathless, his heart pounding like he’s run a marathon, but he’s still just sitting on the steps, Wilbur’s jacket clutched in his hands.

Wilbur stops retreating, thank god. “I--” he starts again, but he cuts himself off, biting his lip.

“What do you need mate? Whatever it is I’m happy to get it for you. Your jacket? I’ve been worried about you without it. Its getting cold.” Phil bites his lip, holds back the words that want to spill out of his mouth like water from a broken dam. Slowly, he holds out the jacket.

Wilbur takes half a step closer, watching Phil’s face, his body, waiting for any indication that Phil will lunge for him. Phil holds utterly still, his heart in his throat.

“I’m sorry,” Wilbur says, so softly that Phil almost doesn’t hear it. “For--” he makes a vague motion to Phil, that Phil has no idea how to interpret, “I didn’t mean to, I swear. I wouldn’t--”

“Its alright Wilbur,” Phil says, “I’m not angry, or anything at you. Neither is Tech. We’re just worried about you. I--we were out looking for you, Techno made me stay behind in case you came--in case you came home.”

Wilbur’s face crumples, “home?” his voice is a croak.

“Always,” Phil breathes, “its always home. As long as you want it to be.”

Wilbur takes a step closer, another, Phil turns to meet him as he falls to his knees. He barely catches him in time to keep Wilbur’s knees from cracking against the concrete.

Phil cups the back of his head, pulling him close, “you’re home, you’re home. My boy, my son, you’re home.”

“I wanted to come back,” Wilbur sobs, “I was scared. I was afraid you’d be angry.”

“Never,” Phil breathes, “I would never be angry at you for coming home. You can *always* come back to me.”

When he Swore

Chapter Summary

“We’re alright now mate,” Phil says, “we’ve got you.”

Wilbur’s eyes burn with rage when they meet Phil’s. “I have you,” he says.

“Well yeah--”

“No.” Wilbur cuts him off. “You’re mine. As much as I’m yours, you’re mine, and they don’t get to fucking do that to you.

Chapter Notes

Really short chapter this time. I tried a couple different ways of getting this conversation to happen but it just wasn't working out so I eventually decided to just write the conversation and leave it at that. I debated doing a double upload but I think I'll leave you guys with just this for today, I'm running out of things in my posting queue and my working queue is all long stuff that I haven't been able to focus on. If this keeps up there might be a Silver Drought in your future rip.

“Wilbur?” Phil asks gently, putting a hand on his son’s shoulder, “you alright mate?” He glances to Techno.

Wilbur had asked, finally, what it was that they were seeking vengeance for. He has always known that they are supervillains, that they are wanted, that they are avenging something. He never asked until today.

And they had told him.

And now he is sitting before them, hunched in on himself, hands clenched into shaking fists.

“Six years,” he says. “Six years in the Vault. And *you!*” he jerks up to face Techno. “They raised you as a child fucking soldier and fucking *experimented on you?*”

Techno twitches, his hand brushes one of the shadows. “Yep.”

“We’re alright now mate,” Phil says, “we’ve got you.”

Wilbur’s eyes burn with rage when they meet Phil’s. “*I have you,*” he says.

“Well yeah--”

“No.” Wilbur cuts him off. “You’re mine. As much as I’m yours, you’re mine, and they don’t get to fucking do that to you. They don’t get to stuff you back in their cage. That’s what they’ll do with you, isn’t it? That’s what the government is talking about. They’re trying to put you back in the Vault. And they’re going to put more people in there too. Innocent people.”

“Yeah,” Techno says softly, “they are.”

“I want to help you stop them.”

“Will,” Phil says cautiously.

“No, Phil, I’m an adult, I’m powerful enough that they’d want to stuff me in there too, and *they hurt you.*”

Phil’s breath catches at the sheer rage in Wilbur’s face. He’s never seen him this angry. He has seen Wilbur frustrated and furious, but never this. Never this deep wrath, the burning desire to tear someone apart.

Phil feels the same way when someone hurts Techno, and he would feel it even more if some fool went after Wilbur.

Maybe a better man would have told his son that he didn’t need to fight for him. Maybe a better man would regret that his baby boy is thirsty for vengeance and blood.

Maybe the Phil who lived before the Vault would have been.

But that man died a long time ago.

and one time he knew what would happen

Chapter Summary

Techno finally releases Wilbur and gives him a shove towards the hall. “Go clean up, you horrid feral child.”

Wilbur snorts, but he doesn’t banter back the way he usually would. Phil sets the fish food aside, “Will?”

“I’ll talk to you after I shower,” Wilbur says. “I, there’s something I need your advice on.”

Phil frowns.

“Its nothing bad,” Wilbur says, “just...I’ll talk to you.”

Chapter Notes

last chapter of Wilbur backstory!

Tomorrow we're on to Techno and then Phil! and then we pop back to the other end of the timeline for some Tubbo Content but after that fam that's all I've got in Dumpster Verse. That's It. This is the largest series I've ever written (over 80k words, which when you remember that I usually hit about 30k for my Big AUs is A Lot) and I really have loved it, but I also have some new projects that I think you guys will like too. If I ever actually finish writing them lol

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Wilbur gets home late. Not terribly late, not late enough that Phil was getting worried, but later than he would have expected.

Wilbur also comes home smelling like garbage.

Techno’s nose wrinkles the moment he steps through the door, “you know you don’t have to eat out of the garbage anymore right? I know old habits die hard but--” he breaks off as Wilbur throws his jacket over his head.

He tries to wrestle it off but Wilbur is holding it tight around him. “Suffer old man!”

Techno twists and yanks Wilbur over the back of the couch to the tune of an inventive squawk/shriek combination. Phil continues feeding his fish.

“When you’re done go take a shower Will, the laundry machine is open, toss your stuff in there.”

“Oh- *kay!*” Wilbur yelps as Techno pins him in a headlock.

“You should probably also clean up if you’re gonna maul him, Techno. And febreze the couch or something.”

Techno finally releases Wilbur and gives him a shove towards the hall. “Go clean up, you horrid feral child.”

Wilbur snorts, but he doesn’t banter back the way he usually would. Phil sets the fish food aside, “Will?”

“I’ll talk to you after I shower,” Wilbur says. “I, there’s something I need your advice on.”

Phil frowns.

“Its nothing bad,” Wilbur says, “just...I’ll talk to you.”

Phil looks to Techno as Wilbur disappears down the hall.

“Shadows didn’t say anything, but they didn’t follow him long,” Techno says, anticipating his question. “I dunno what’s up either. Nothing too bad, but something’s definitely eating at him.”

Phil hums, but nudges at Techno’s shoulder, “go get out of those clothes, you smell like trash.”

“Quit worrying,” Techno admonishes, standing all the same, “he said it wasn’t anything bad.” He holds out his arms, “you want a hug?”

Phil snorts, “no, you’re not infecting me with the stink, get out of here.”

Techno snickers and still tries to make a go for Phil’s hair as he goes by. Phil ducks out of the way and points a warning finger at him.

Wilbur takes *forever* in the shower. Once they had unlimited hot water that boy forgot everything he ever knew about reasonable shower length.

Phil is glad for it, glad that Wilbur doesn’t ration things or hoard, glad that he is secure in their plenty.

But god does he wish he’d *hurry up*.

Maybe Phil can go knock and remind him...

Techno--freshly cleaned up as well--wraps an arm around his shoulders. “Patience,” he rumbles.

Phil sighs and leans back against him, shuffling a bit to shove his wing behind Techno. The couch was not made with his anatomy in mind, but he makes it work.

What are a few crimped feathers?

Finally (*finally*) Wilbur gets out of the shower. His hair is still damp when he appears. He sits down in Phil's chair, holding the decorative pillow in his lap like a child clutching a toy.

"So, I... I was out doing recon," he begins. "And 404 showed up, naturally." He rolls his eyes, but Phil tenses.

404 is one of the few heroes that Wilbur can't influence. Those with mental abilities can't affect each other. Which is why Wilbur and 404 rarely travel alone when they are likely to encounter each other. Neither of them is a good fighter.

"I didn't engage," Wilbur says, holding up a hand to forestall Phil's worries, "I ditched as soon as I saw him looking around."

"And you ended up hiding in a dumpster," Techno concludes.

Wilbur wrinkles his nose, "yeah. I was just gonna wait a bit until he cleared out but." He buries his fingers into the pillow, holding it tight. "Someone found me."

Phil tenses, wings flaring.

"Not--not a hero. It was a kid. Some street kid who was looking for something to eat."

Phil relaxes and a smile creeps onto his lips. This is a story he's intimately familiar with. Wilbur has surprised him a lot over the years, but he's pretty confident that he can predict how this will go.

Chapter End Notes

He was very wrong. He had no fucking clue what was gonna happen with Tommy.

End Notes

You can find me on tumblr at technobladesbasement

If you're inspired to create anything based on my fics, art, writing, interperative dance you have full permission to do it. Inspiring other people to do stuff is my favorite thing.

If you saw typos no you didn't <3

I love comments but I am shit at replying to them, sometimes Maddie or Zambo will reply for me because they are blessed, wonderful people who know I have so much anxiety. So much. but I love all comments regardless and I thank everyone who leaves me one, they brighten my day

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!